

Advent

A Simple Retreat with Fr Michael Winstanley SDB

First Theme(Outline): **Jesus Christ**



The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’ And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

1. The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- A new beginning
- Good news
 - Greco-Roman world
 - Jewish world
- Of = from/about
 - From: the message Jesus brought and preached
 - About: the significance of his life, death and resurrection
- Mark’s faith stance:
 - Jesus is the Christ/Messiah
 - Jesus is the Son of God

2. God enters the story through the prophets

- Composite text (Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, Exodus 23:20)
- God is the initiator, the force behind all that will happen
- God addresses Jesus
- The messenger prepares the Lord's way
- The Baptist's role is to prepare God's long-awaited and decisive intervention

3. John the Baptist

- The narrative begins with the messenger (scripture fulfilled immediately)
- Mark's description of his role is brief
- The wilderness setting
 - Honeymoon idealism
 - Future expectation
- The Baptiser
 - Old Testament, Pharisees, Qumran and the use of water
 - Personal, once, for everyone
 - Imminent & urgent
 - National and personal conversion
- His message:
 - 'more powerful one': term applied to God in Old Testament
 - 'coming one'
 - Unworthiness
 - Baptism with the Spirit

4. The Baptism of Jesus

- The opening of the heavens
- The anointing with the Spirit/dove
- The voice: beloved Son

5. The Testing of Jesus

- The Spirit's action
- The wilderness
- Wild beasts
- Angels
- Key to Jesus' mission: final conflict with evil

6. Proclamation of God's reigning

- Baptist's arrest
- Time is fulfilled
- Conversion and trust